

Governor's Upper Yellowstone River Task Force
Meeting Summary
May 16, 2000
City/County Community Room
Meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

I. Introductions

Members Present:

John Bailey, Chair	Jerry O'Hair
Mike Atwood, Vice Chair	Brant Oswald
David Haug	Bob Wiltshire
Tom Lane	Ellen Woodbury

Others Present:

John Logan, Ex-Officio	May Mace	Tom Hallin
Alan Steinle, Ex-Officio	Lionel Dicharry	Todd O'Hair
Liz Galli-Noble, Coordinator	Phil Farnes	Jeanne-Marie Souvigney
Amy Miller, Administrative Secretary	Will Rizzo	Jim Robinson
Sandy Erhardt		

II. Prior Meeting Minutes

The April 18, 2000 minutes were not reviewed at this meeting.

III. Announcements

1. Recap of the *Hydrologic Response to the 1988 Fires in the Upper Yellowstone Basin* Workshop

The Task Force-sponsored workshop held on Saturday, May 13 was discussed for 25 minutes; the comments were very positive. Bob Wiltshire thanked Phil Farnes and Liz Galli-Noble for the preparation of the workshop. John Bailey thanked everyone for their involvement in the workshop, with special thanks to our presenters: Chuck Dalby, Phil Farnes, Ward McCaughey, Roy Renkin, and Mark Story.

2. Watershed Coordinator Roundtable, May 15 to 17, Chico Hot Springs

Watershed coordinators and watershed groups from EPA Region 8: Colorado, Utah, Wyoming, Montana, and North and South Dakota will be attending the Watershed Coordinator Roundtable. The purpose or intent of the roundtable is to assess the needs of watersheds. Liz is attending the roundtable, representing the Task Force. Mary Ellen Wolfe, Montana Watercourse Director, has invited the Task Force to go on an informal Yellowstone River tour with roundtable participants on May 17 from 1 to 6 pm. The following Task Force members volunteered to participate on the tour: John Bailey, David Haug, Rod Siring, Roy Aserlind, and Brant Oswald. Liz Galli-Noble and Amy Miller will also go on the tour.

3. US District Court Judgment in Civil Case: US Army Corps of Engineers (defendant) v. Montana Council of Trout Unlimited, et al. (plaintiff)

An announcement was made that on May 11, 2000, Judge Jack Shanstrom handed down a Court decision on the civil case focusing on cumulative impacts between the Corps and Trout Unlimited et al. Copies of the decision were acquired by John Bailey and distributed at the meeting. Allan Steinle, Montana Program Manager for the Corps and Task Force member, reported that the Corps will do their best to follow the court's decision. The Corps has been ordered to reopen 14 permits and to complete the cumulative portions in those cases. The Corps will continue to accept and evaluate applications, but an enhanced cumulative impact analysis, developed in response to the lawsuit, will be applied. Allan Steinle explained that the Corps uses a database in Omaha. The Montana office has full access to the database and controls data that is added to it, (for example, determine the effects of bank stabilization), and when necessary brings in engineers from their Omaha office. The Corps will use the database (and the physical features inventory in Park County) to identify other projects in the same reach as a proposed project. Allan explained that the Task Force investigation on the upper Yellowstone River would add to the "body of knowledge" in assessing the cumulative effects of bank stabilization.

Other orders within the decision include:

The Corps is not automatically required to perform as EIS for each project.

The plaintiff's request for an injunction was denied.

The plaintiff's request for attorney's fees and costs was denied.

Alan Steinle had not heard if this lawsuit decision might bring in additional funding possibilities for or from the Corps.

IV. Rewrite of the MOU between Task Force and Park Conservation District

A modified *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)* was presented to the Task Force for approval. It reflected a previously-approved District administration fee increase from eight to ten percent, effective July 1, 2000.

Bob Wiltshire made a motion to accept the modified MOU, it was seconded by Jerry O'Hair; the motion passed unanimously.

John Bailey signed the MOU for the Task Force. The Park Conservation District will sign the *MOU* at their next board meeting.

V. 2000 Workshops

The Task Force chose to postpone the Riparian/Wetland Management Workshop until the fall of 2000. This scheduling will work better for everyone involved, including Drew Overholser, Montana Watercourse, and his staff.

VI. Financial Updates

Grant spending report:

Amy Miller explained that she had not submitted any expense reports during the past month and therefore did not have expenses to report for this meeting. Amy mentioned that she would have expenses for the Education Grant received for the Fire Workshop at the next meeting.

New grant applications submitted:

The DNRC Reclamation and Development (RDGP) grant for \$300,000 was submitted on May 15, 2000. Liz thanked the Task Force members for their support letters for the grant, and reported that Mark Simonich (Department of Environmental Quality Director) also submitted a support letter for the grant application. The support letter states that Mark feels that reclamation projects should be priority for RDGP funding, and then if funding remains, he supports the Task Force grant for crucial state need.

John Bailey reported that Mark Simonich also recommended that the Task Force also apply for a Renewable Resource Grant through the DNRC. The Task Force can only receive one of the two grants (RDGP or Renewable Resource Grant). Liz, with John Bailey's approval, submitted a Renewable Resource Grant for \$100,000 to fund the Wildlife Assessment. Liz reported that if the Task Force only receives \$100,000, she will look for additional grant funding to cover Fisheries Phase II. The US Geological Survey (the major research partner in both grants) is contributing a large amount in in-kind match. The Task Force would have to provide \$7,360 cash match and \$2,640 in-kind match (a total of \$10,000) for the Reclamation and Development Grant to pay for the Park Conservation District's eight percent administration fees.

Liz requested a motion to approve spending \$7,360 from the Start-up funds to fund the Wildlife Study within the Reclamation and Development Grant.

Ellen Woodbury made a motion to approve the budget for the Renewable Resource Grant, it was seconded by Brant Oswald; the motion passed unanimously.

One future funding opportunity being pursued is the US Army Corps of Engineers Technical Assistance Program (Section 22).

VII. Approval for the purchase of digital camera

Liz reported that the Park Conservation District is purchasing a digital camera and the District asked if the Task Force would share the expense. Liz explained that she could use the digital camera for many educational and public outreach materials, in particular the Task Force annual report. The \$250 of funding needed could come out of the RDGP grant, specifically budgeted for office equipment. Amy Miller reported that digital camera prices range from \$299 at the low end, to \$599 in the mid range, to approximately \$800 at the upper end. The Park Conservation District is considering a purchase in the middle range at about \$599.

Bob Wiltshire made a motion to approve the Task Force spending \$250 from the RDGP Grant for the purchase of a digital camera; it was seconded by Ellen Woodbury; the

motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Schedule Future Task Force Meetings

Liz Galli-Noble would like Task Force members to call her at 222-3701 if they will be unable to attend scheduled meetings.

Next Task Force meetings are:

There will be no meeting in June.

July 18, 2000 at the City/County Courthouse, Community Room at 7:00 p.m.

VIII. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.